

TIME

The image is the cover of TIME magazine. It features a dramatic, low-angle photograph of the World Trade Center towers. The towers are shown as massive, white, ribbed structures reaching into a deep blue sky. A large, intense explosion is occurring at the top of the left tower, with bright orange and yellow flames and a thick, billowing cloud of dark grey smoke and debris. Debris is seen falling from the towers. The overall tone is somber and powerful.

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TIME To Our Readers

I GOT UP A LITTLE EARLIER THAN USUAL LAST TUESDAY. MY DAY, perhaps like yours, was shaping up to be pretty busy, so I wanted to get a head start. A little before 8 a.m., I kissed my wife and son goodbye and headed to TIME's offices in midtown Manhattan. By 8:30, I was at my desk, answering e-mails. Shortly before 9 a.m., Steve Koepp, the deputy managing editor, called on his cell phone from downtown. Walking his son to school, he could see that a plane had crashed into the north tower of the World Trade Center.

Thus began for all of us a day that will live as much in infamy as Dec. 7, 1941. Terrorism has struck America before, but never this brazenly and never with such heartbreaking destruction. As my colleagues and I watched the horrific events, we decided to devote a special issue to memorializing this day and to get it into our readers' hands as quickly as possible.

We have ripped up issues for news before, of course; in fact, on that first day of infamy, when Pearl Harbor was bombed, we ditched the cover we had planned (on a new Walt Disney movie called *Dumbo*) and switched to Admiral Husband E. Kimmel, commander in chief of the Pacific Fleet. (In those days we closed early in the week.) In this case, since we now close on Saturdays, the workweek had just begun, so we didn't have to throw anything out; we just started from scratch.

Jim Nachtwey, who is usually overseas covering wars for TIME, rushed to the World Trade Center to shoot photos for this issue. As fate would have it, TIME's James Carney was one of only 13 reporters traveling on Air Force One with President George Bush when he took off from Florida and secretly flew to a secure military base in Louisiana. Other TIME reporters raced to the World Trade Center and hospitals around Manhattan, while our journalists around the world—from Washington to Kabul, from Los Angeles to Jerusalem—filed reports overnight Tuesday. All this reporting landed on the desk of senior editor Nancy Gibbs, who over the course of dozens of covers has proved that no one is better at capturing a moment of high drama and deep emotion.

While my colleagues in New York City scrambled to meet our deadlines, many of us also tried to reach relatives and friends who work in downtown Manhattan. I looked at hundreds of photographs for this issue, and as a native New Yorker whose dad was a New York City policeman for 25 years, I kept coming back to the faces of my fellow New Yorkers who escaped death and the cops and fire fighters who helped them do it, knowing that in the days to come we will see so many pictures of those who did not make it out alive.

As soon as we finished this special issue, we went right back to work on our regular issue. This is a story that will be with us for a very long time, and we and our colleagues at *time.com* will cover it as thoroughly and nimbly as we did in the first 24 hours. Meanwhile, all of us offer our condolences to the relatives and friends of those who lost their lives on Sept. 11, innocent victims of terrorism who will never again be able to kiss those they love before they head off to work.

Jim Kelly

James Kelly, Managing Editor

COVER. Photograph by Lyle Owerko—Gamma



THE SECOND STRIKE The hijackers chose planes light on passengers who might interfere, but loaded with fuel for long flights; this 767 could hold 24,000 gal. of fuel

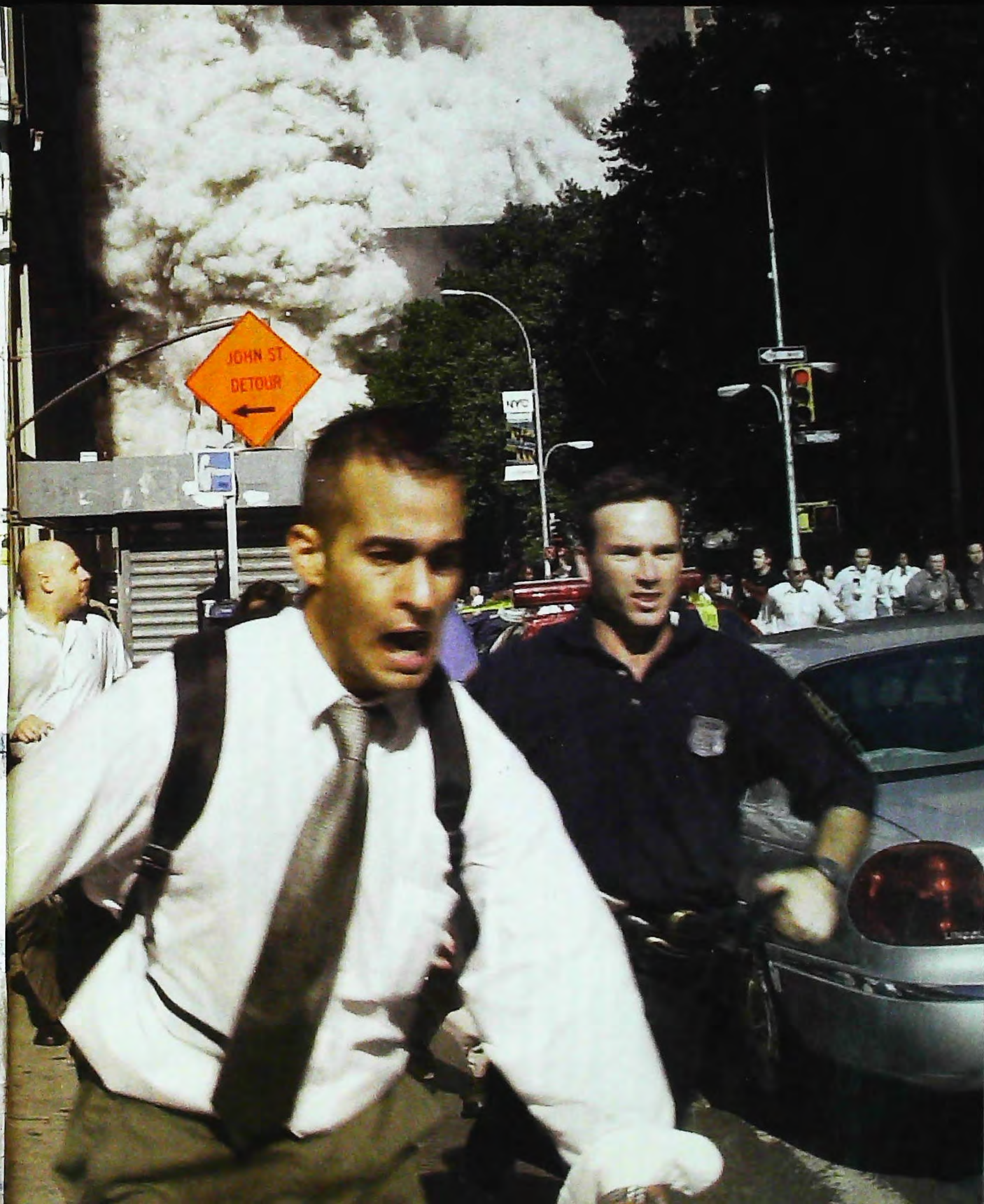
ROBERT CLARK—AURORA FOR TIME



DAY OF INFAMY

MAXIMUM IMPACT More than 40,000 people—the population of a small city—worked in the Twin Towers, and tens of thousands more visited every day

SPENCER PLATT—GETTY IMAGES

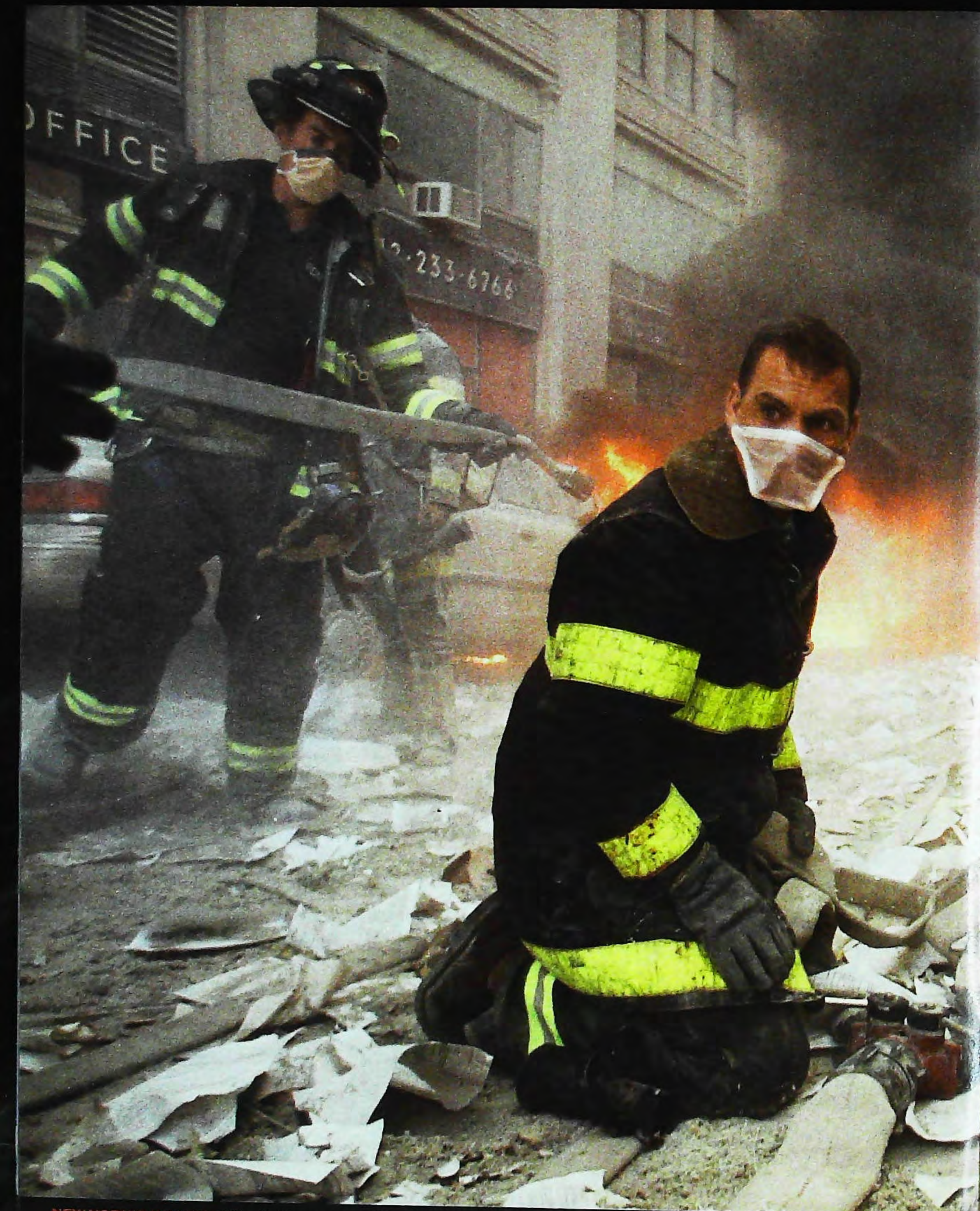


FLEEING THE CLOUD Never imagining that the towers would fall, many people drifted closer. When the buildings collapsed, they stampeded, and dozens were knocked down

SUZANNE PLUNKETT—AP



THE LONG FALL "You saw their ties flying up in the air," recalls David Burrell, a broker, who watched several people fall or jump to their death. A man and a woman held hands on the way down



NEW YORK'S BRAVEST Fire fighters were still going in when the buildings collapsed. One ducked under his truck and emerged to find everyone else in his squad dead



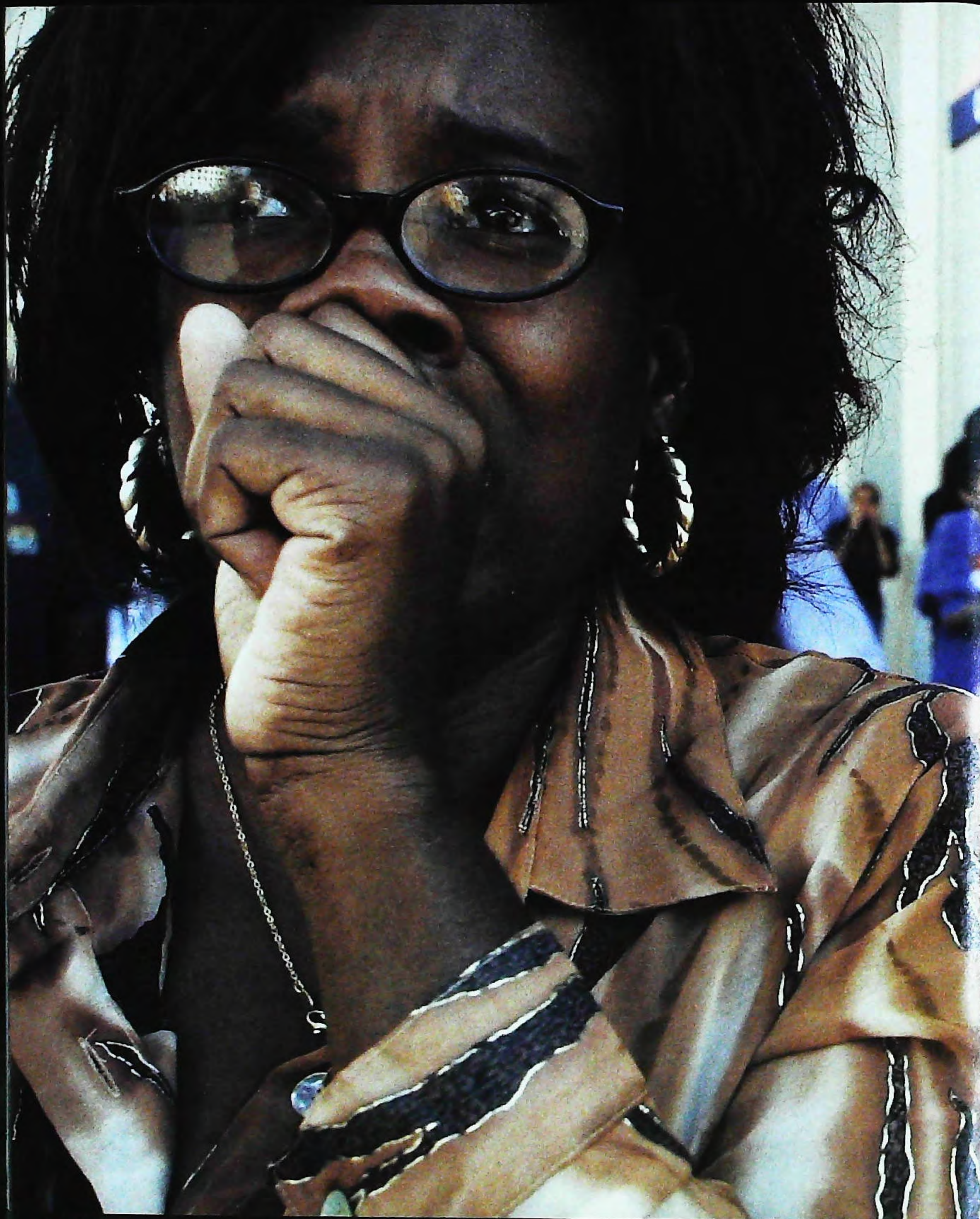
SURVIVOR Hospitals postponed elective surgeries and sent scores of doctors to the scene to treat the few who made it out alive

GUINARA SAMIOLAVA - AP



HOLY WAR As large swaths of lower Manhattan were turning to dust, farther uptown, at First Presbyterian on Fifth Avenue, the faithful gathered to hear the Rev. Jon Walton's "service of mourning and lament"

JAMES NACHTWEY—VII FOR TIME



RELUCTANT WITNESSES As the first building collapsed, some covered their eyes, and others couldn't stop watching. Said one eyewitness: "All I could think was, 'This is not possible'"

ANGEL FRANCO—THE NEW YORK TIMES



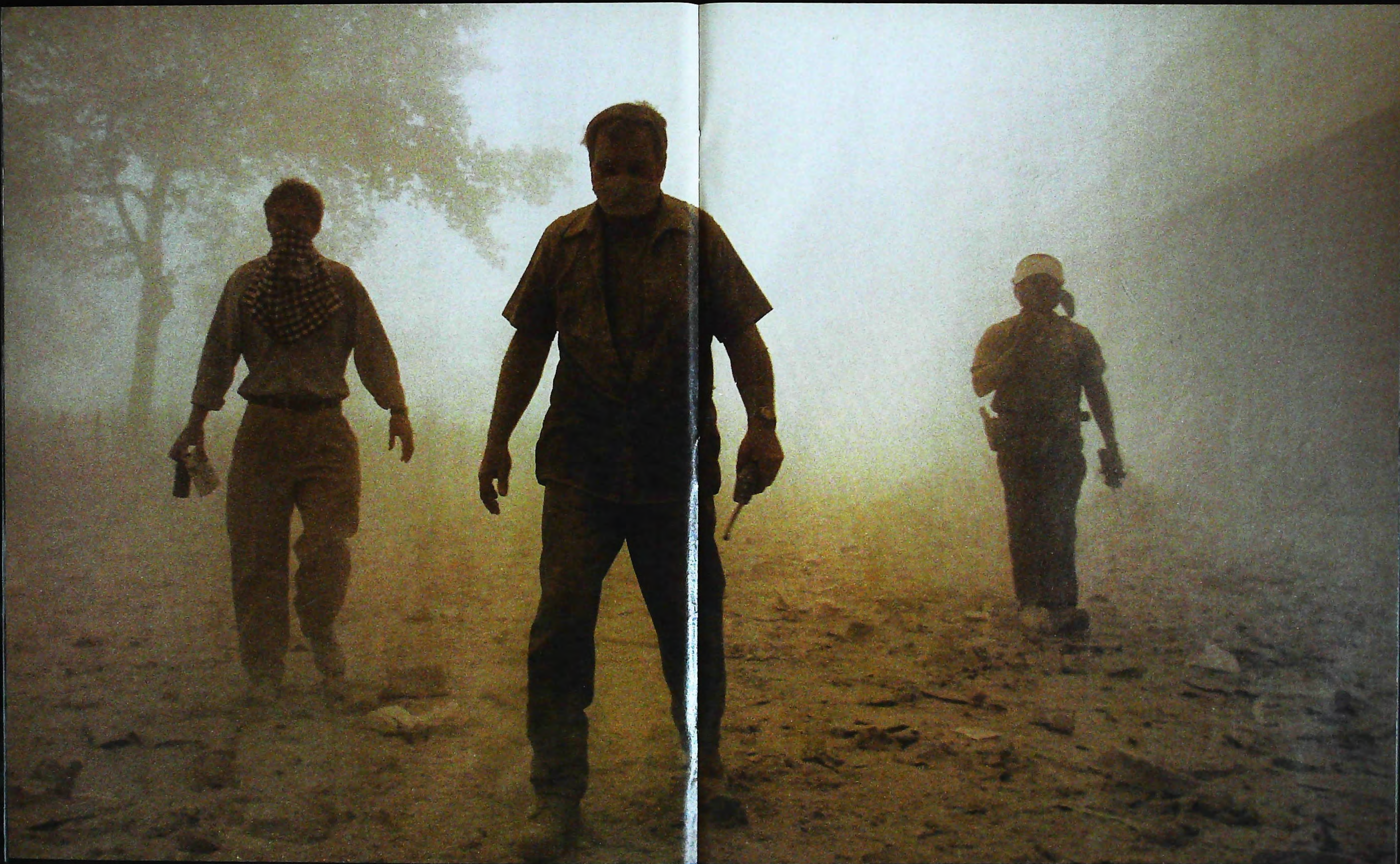
MAKESHIFT E.R. Teams of emergency medical personnel from the world's finest teaching hospitals performed triage under the most primitive conditions

JUSTIN RANE—THE NEW YORK TIMES



EVACUATION Rescue workers rushed the dead and injured away from the choking soot. One construction crew donated plywood to fashion emergency gurneys

HARRY ZERNIKE—GAMMA



ASH TUESDAY Everything and everybody was coated with a layer of soot. "You know those refugees you see in stories about war?" asked one woman. "That was me"

JAMES NACHTWEY—VII FOR TIME



GHOSTLY REMAINS Buried in the rubble of 1 World Trade Center were relics of the work taking place there only hours earlier, including expense reports, memos and computer discs

JAMES NACHTWEY/VI FOR TIME



RARE RESPITE While one cop caught his breath in a deli near the World Trade Center, another reported, "I saw body parts all over the place, and I had to pull the car over to take a minute and cry"

RUTH FREEMAN—THE NEW YORK TIMES



FALLEN COMRADES Among the hundreds of fire fighters feared dead was chief of special operations Ray Downey; in 1995 he led the group of New York City fire fighters who flew to Oklahoma City

TIMOTHY FADEN/GAMMA FOR TIME

TWIN TERRORS

When two hijacked airliners ripped through the World Trade Center towers, the real horror was only beginning

PLANES SLAM TOWERS ...

8:45 a.m.
American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 hijacked en route from Boston to Los Angeles with 92 passengers aboard, slams into the north tower

9:06
United Airlines Flight 175, also a Boeing 767 hijacked en route from Boston to Los Angeles with 65 passengers aboard, banks hard and slices through the south tower

... AND WEAKENED BUILDINGS COLLAPSE

10:00
The sudden collapse of the south tower traps hundreds of rescuers below, in addition to perhaps thousands of workers in the building. Debris guts the 4 World Trade Center building below

10:29
Weakened by its imploded twin, the north tower collapses, raining more debris and crushing buildings and rescuers below

5:25 p.m.
As fires and debris finally take their toll, the 7 World Trade Center building falls

FIRST IMPACT

American Flight 11

WHO WAS INSIDE

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey leased six floors of the north tower. Cantor Fitzgerald Securities, on floors 101-105, cannot account for 1,000 of its employees

The 360-ft. television mast on Tower 1 supported 10 television antennas and numerous other services. Ten television stations, including all the major networks, broadcast from the mast

SECOND IMPACT

United Flight 175

1 World Trade Center

Second to collapse

Completed: 1970
Height: 110 floors
Floor Sizes: (9-105) 45,000-50,000 sq. ft.
Elevators: 97 passenger, 6 freight

2 World Trade Center

First to collapse

Completed: 1972
Height: 110 floors
Floor Sizes: (2-109) 45,000-50,000 sq. ft.
Elevators: 97 passenger, 6 freight

7 World Trade Center

Third to collapse

WHO WAS INSIDE
Morgan Stanley Dean Witter was the single largest tenant in the south tower, leasing 21 floors. Both buildings hold 50,000 people

All lower buildings around the towers virtually destroyed by falling debris

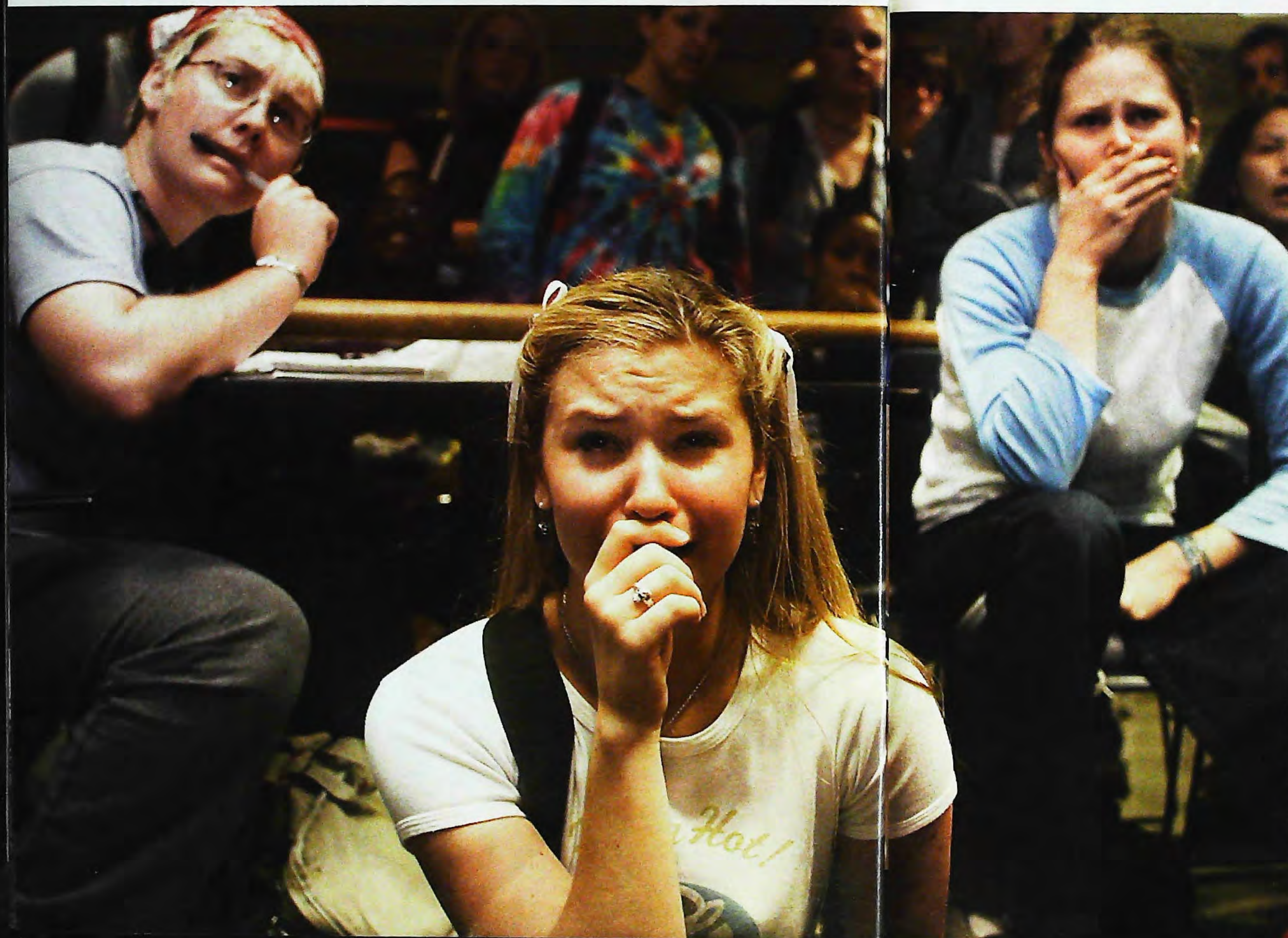
WHY DID THEY COLLAPSE?

Each of the towers, more than 200 ft. wide on each side, contained a central steel core surrounded by open office space. Eighteen-inch steel tubes ran vertically along the outside, providing much of the support for the building

Once the plane damaged the central core, the weight was redistributed to the outer steel tubes, which were slowly deformed by the added weight and the heat of the fires

Sources: Port Authority of New York and New Jersey; Associated Press; Skycreepers, by Judith Dwyer; Perpetual Motion, by Joe Mysak and Schifler
TIME Graphic by Ed Gabel

If you want to humble an empire



it makes sense to maim its cathedrals. They are symbols of its faith, and when they crumple and burn, it

tells us we are not so powerful and we can't be safe. The Twin Towers of the World Trade Center, planted at the base of Manhattan island with the Statue of Liberty as their sentry, and the Pentagon, a squat, concrete fort on the banks of the Potomac, are the sanctuaries of money and power that our enemies may imagine define us. But that assumes our faith rests on what we can buy and build, and that has never been America's true God.

On a normal day, we value heroism because it is uncommon. On Sept. 11, we valued heroism because it was everywhere. The

By Nancy Gibbs fire fighters kept climbing the stairs of the tallest buildings in town, even as the steel moaned and the cracks spread in zippers through the walls, to get to the people trapped in the sky. We don't know yet how many of them died, but once we know, as Mayor Rudy Giuliani said, "it will be more than we can bear." That sentiment was played out in miniature in the streets, where fleeing victims pulled the wounded to safety, and at every hospital, where the lines to give blood looped round and round the block. At the medical-supply companies, which sent supplies without being asked. At Verizon, where a worker threw on a New York fire department jacket to go save people. And then again and again all across the country, as people checked on those they loved to find out if they were safe and then looked for some way to help.

This was the bloodiest day on American soil since our Civil War, a modern Antietam played out in real time, on fast-forward, and not with soldiers but with secretaries, security guards, lawyers, bankers, janitors. It was strange that a day of war was a day we stood still. We couldn't move—that must have been the whole idea—so we had no choice but to watch. Every city cataloged its targets; residents looked at their skylines, wondering if they would be different in the morning. The Sears Tower in Chicago was evacuated, as were colleges and museums. Disney World shut down, and Major League Baseball canceled its games, and nuclear power plants went to top security status; the Hoover Dam and the Mall of America shut down, and Independence Hall in Philadelphia, and Mount Rushmore. It was as though someone had taken a huge brush and painted a bull's-eye around every place Americans gather, every icon we revere, every service we depend on, and vowed to take them out or shut them down, or force us to do it ourselves.

SHOCK IN THE HEARTLAND In Iowa City, Iowa, Megan Elise McFarlane, center, watches television coverage of the attacks on Washington and New York City



FIRST STRIKE At 8:45 a.m., American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767 with 81 passengers onboard, approaches, then slams into the north tower of the World Trade Center

Terror works like a musical composition, so many instruments, all in tune, playing perfectly together to create their desired effect. Sorrow and horror, and fear. The first plane is just to get our attention. Then, once we are transfixed, the second plane comes and repeats the theme until the blinding coda of smoke and debris crumbles on top of the rescue workers who have gone in to try to save anyone who survived the opening movements. And we watch, speechless, as the sirens, like some awful choir, hour after hour let you know that it is not over yet, wait, there's more.

IT WAS, OF COURSE, A PERFECT DAY, 70° AND FLAWLESS SKIES, perfect for a nervous pilot who has stolen a huge jet and intends to turn it into a missile. It was a Boeing 767 from Boston, American Airlines Flight 11 bound for Los Angeles with 81 passengers, that first got the attention of air traffic controllers. The plane took off at 7:59 a.m. and headed west, over the Adirondacks, before taking a sudden turn south and diving down toward the heart of New York City. Meanwhile American Flight 757 had left Dulles; United Flight 175 left Boston at 7:58, and United Flight 93 left Newark three minutes later, bound for San Francisco. All climbed into beautiful clear skies, all four planes on transcontinental flights, plump with fuel, ripe to explode. "They couldn't carry anything—other than an atom bomb—that could be as bad as what they were flying," observed a veteran investigator.

The first plane hit the World Trade Center's north tower at 8:45, ripping through the building's skin and setting its upper floors ablaze. People thought it was a sonic boom, or a construction accident, or freak lightning on a lovely fall day; at worst, a horrible airline accident, a plane losing altitude, out of control, a pilot trying to ditch in the river and missing. But as the gruesome rains came—bits of plane, a tire, office furniture, glass, a hand, a leg, whole bodies, began falling all around—people in the streets all stopped and looked, and fell silent. As the smoke rose, the ash rained gently down, along with a whole lost flock of paper shuffling down from the sky to the street below, edges charred, plane tickets and account statements and bills and reports and volumes and volumes of unfinished business floating down to earth.

Almost instantly, a distant wail of sirens came from all directions, even as people poured from the building, even as a second plane bore down on lower Manhattan. Louis Garcia



CLUED IN President Bush first learned of the second attack when chief of staff Andrew Card whispered the news during a Sarasota, Fla., elementary school photo-op

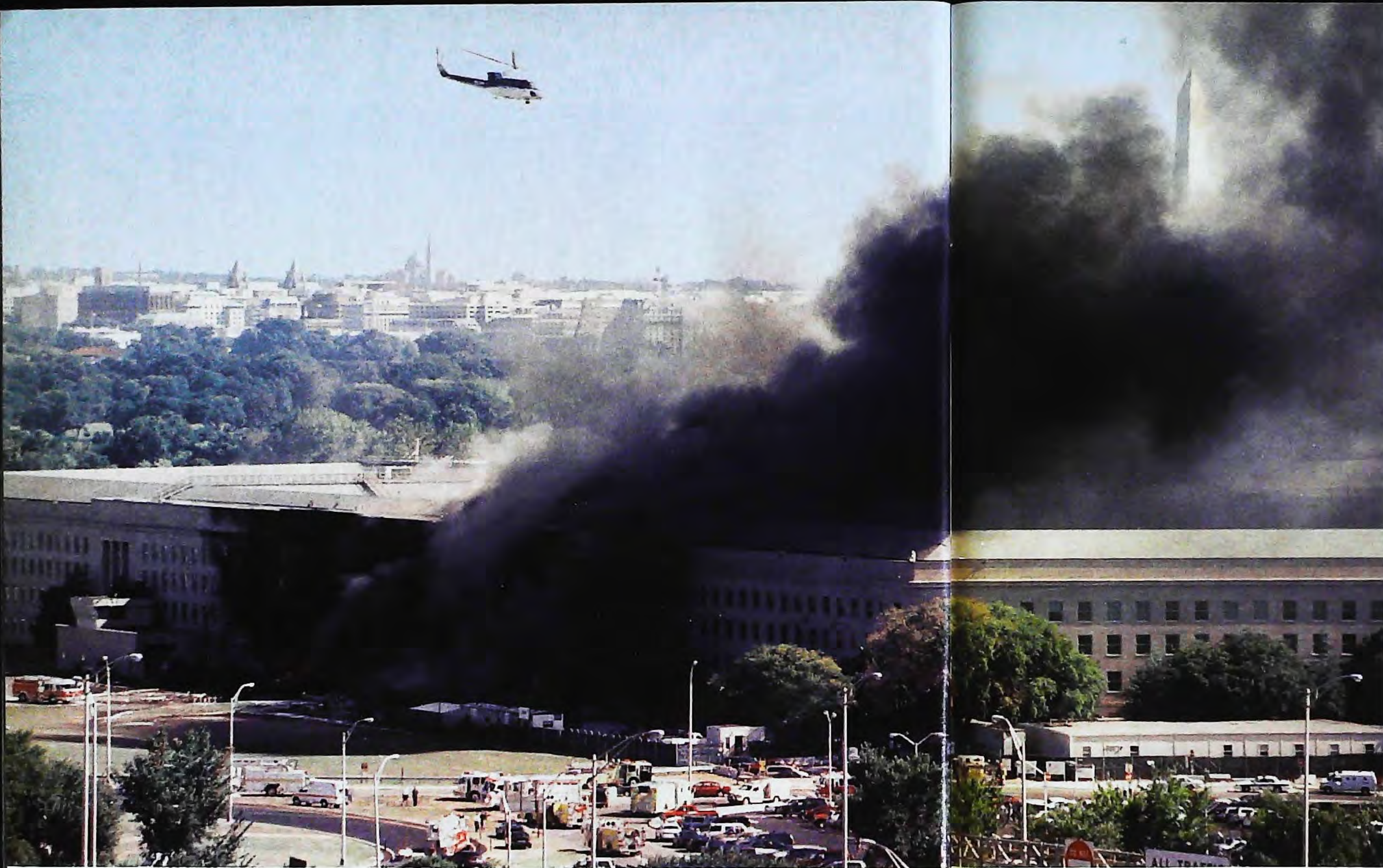
was among the first medics on the scene. "There were people running over to us burnt from head to toe. Their hair was burned off. There were compound fractures, arms and legs sticking out of the skin. One guy had no hair left on his head." Of the six patients in his first ambulance run, two died on the way to St. Vincent's Hospital.

The survivors of the first plot to bring down the Twin Towers, the botched attempt in 1993 that left six dead, had a great advantage over their colleagues. When the first explosion came, they knew to get out. Others were paralyzed by the noise, confused by the instructions. Consultant Andy Perry still has the reflexes. He grabbed his pal Nathan Shields from his office, and they began to run down 46 flights. With each passing floor more and more people joined the flow down the steps. The lights stayed on, but the lower stairs were filled with water from burst pipes and sprinklers. "Everyone watch your step," people called out. "Be careful!" The smell of jet fuel suffused the building. Hallways collapsed, flames shot out of a men's room. By the time they reached the lobby, they just wanted to get out—but the streets didn't look any safer. "It was chaos out there," Shields says. "Finally we ran for it." They raced into the street in time to see the second plane bearing down. Even as they ran away, there were still people standing around in the lobby waiting to be told what to do. "There were no emergency announcements—it just happened so quickly nobody knew what was going on," says Perry. "This guy we were talking to saw at least 12 people jumping out of [the tower] because of the fires. He was standing next to a guy who got hit by shrapnel and was immediately killed." Workers tore off their shirts to make bandages and tourniquets for the wounded; others used bits of clothing as masks to help them breathe. Whole stretches of street were slick with blood, and up and down the avenues you could hear the screams of people plunging from the burning tower. People watched in horror as a man tried to shimmy down the outside of the tower. He made it about three floors before flipping backward to the ground.

Architect Bob Shelton had his foot in a cast; he'd broken it falling off a curb two weeks ago. He heard the explosion of the first plane hitting the north tower from his 56th-floor office in the south tower. As he made his way down the stairwell, his building came under attack as well. "You could hear the building cracking. It sounded like when you have a bunch of spaghetti, and you break it in half to boil it," Shelton knew that what he was hearing was bad. "It was structural failure," Shelton says. "Once a building like that is off center, that's it." "There was no panic," he says of his escape

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down the stairs. "We were working as a team, helping everyone along the way. Someone carried my crutches, and I supported myself on the railing."

Gilbert Richard Ramirez works for BlueCross BlueShield on the 20th floor of the north tower. After the explosion he ran to the windows and saw the debris falling, and sheets of white building material, and then something else. "There was a body. It looked like a man's body, a full-size man." The features were indistinguishable as it fell: the body was black, apparently charred. Someone pulled an emergency alarm switch, but nothing happened. Someone else broke into the emergency phone, but it was dead. People began to say their prayers.

"Relax, we're going to get out of here," Ramirez said. "I was telling them, 'Breathe, breathe, Christ is on our side, we're gonna get out of here.'" He prodded everyone out the door, herding stragglers. It was an eerie walk down the smoky stairs, a path to safety that ran through the suffering. They saw peo-

READY, AIM The White House may have been the real target, but American Flight 77 hit the Pentagon instead. The Boeing 757 exploded into the building's west side

ple who had been badly burned. Their skin, he says, "was like a grayish color, and it was like dripping, or peeling, like the skin was peeling off their body." One woman was screaming. "She said she lost her friend, her friend went out the window, a gust sucked her out." As they descended, they were passed by fire fighters and rescue workers, panting, pushing their way up the stairs in their heavy boots and gear. "At least 50 of them must have passed us," says Ramirez. "I told them, 'Do a good job.'" He pauses. "I saw those guys one time, but they're not gonna be there again." When he got outside to the street there were bodies scattered on the ground, and then another came plummeting, and another. "Every time I looked up at the building, somebody was jumping from it. Like from 107, Windows on the World. There was one, and then another one. I couldn't un-

derstand their jumping. I guess they couldn't see any hope."

The terror triggered other reactions besides heroism. Robert Falcon worked in the parking garage at the towers: "When the blast shook it went dark and we all went down, and I had a flashlight and everyone was screaming at me. People were ripping my shirt to try and get to my flashlight, and they were crushing me. The whole crowd was on top of me wanting the flashlight."

Michael Otten, an assistant vice president at Mizuho Capital Markets, was headed down the stairs around the 46th floor when the announcement came over the loudspeakers that the south tower was secure, people could go back to their desks or leave the building. He proceeded to the 44th floor, an elevator-transfer floor. One elevator loaded up and headed down, then came back empty, so he and a crowd of others piled in. One man's backpack kept the doors from closing. The seconds ticked by. "We wanted to say something, but the worst thing you can

do is go against each other, and just as I thought it was going to close, it was about 9:00, 9:03, whenever it was that the second plane crashed into the building. The walls of the elevator caved in; they fell on a couple people." Otten and others groped through the dust to find a stairway, but the doors were locked. Finally they found a clearer passage, found a stairway they could get into and fled down to the street.

Even as people streamed down the stairs, the cracks were appearing in the walls as the building shuddered and cringed. Steam pipes burst, and at one point an elevator door burst open and a man fell out, half burned alive, his skin hanging off. People dragged him out of the elevator and helped get him out of the building to the doctors below. "If I had listened to the announcement," says survivor Joan Feldman, "I'd be dead right now."

Felipe Oyola and his wife Adianes did listen to the announcement. When Oyola heard the first explosion in his office on the 81st floor of the south tower, he raced down to the 78th floor to find her. They met at the elevator bank; she was terrified. But when the announcement came over the loudspeaker that the tower was safe, they both went back to work. Oyola was back on 81 when the second plane arrived. "As soon as I went upstairs, I looked out the window, and I see falling debris and people. Then the office was on top of me. I managed to escape, and I've been looking for my wife ever since."

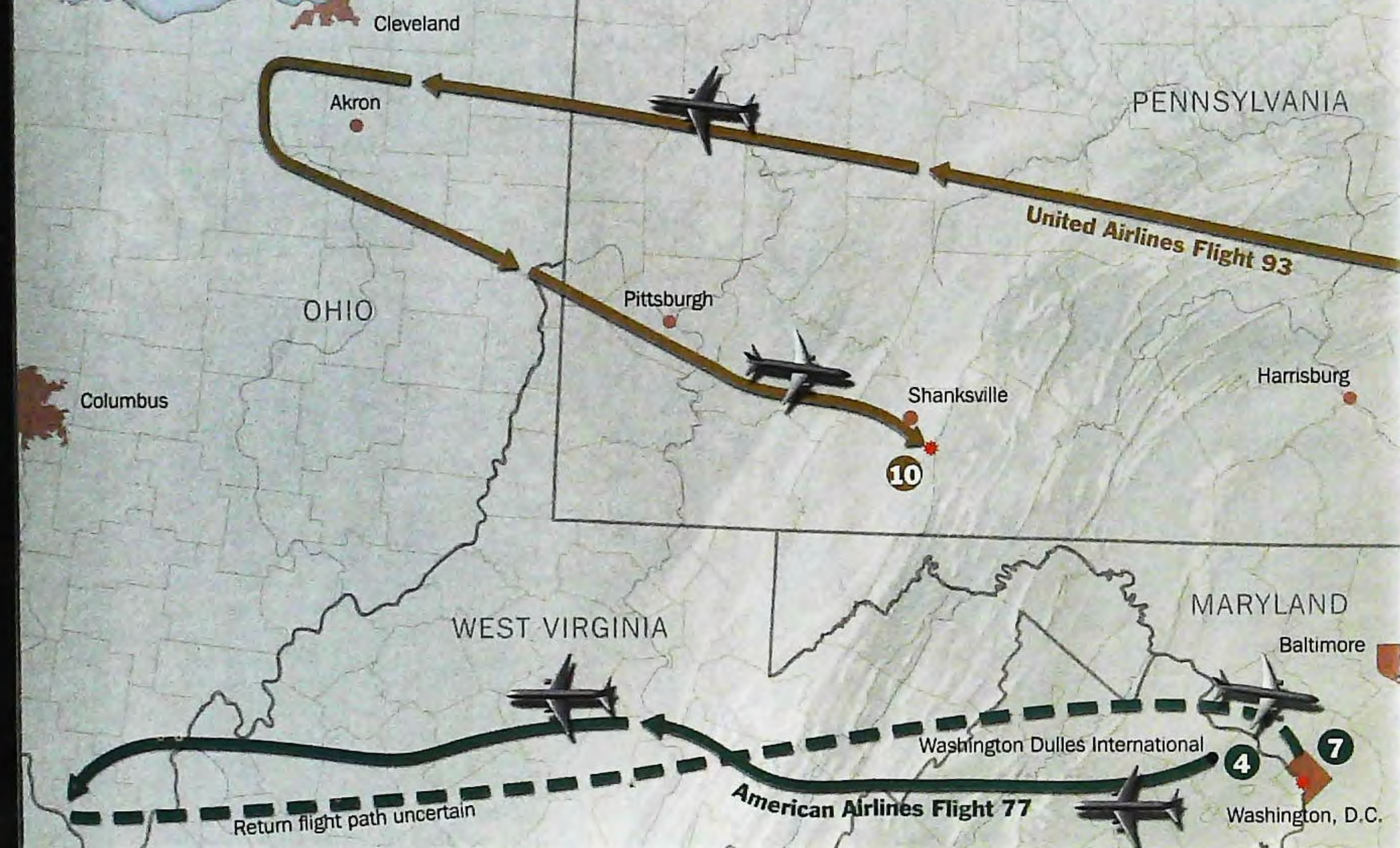
UNITED FLIGHT 175 LEFT BOSTON AT 7:58 A.M., HEADED to Los Angeles. When it passed the Massachusetts-Connecticut border, it made a 30-degree turn, and then an even sharper turn and swooped down on Manhattan, between the buildings, to impale the south tower at 9:06. This plane seemed to hit lower and harder; maybe that's because by now every camera in the city was trained on the towers, and the crowds in the street, refugees from the first explosion, were there to see it. Desks and chairs and people were sucked out the windows and rained down on the streets below. Men and women, cops and fire fighters watched and wept. As fire and debris fell, cars blew up; the air smelled of smoke and concrete, that smell that spits out of jackhammers chewing up pavement. You could taste the air more easily than you could breathe it.

P.S. 89 is an elementary school just up the street; most of the families live and work in the financial district, and when bedlam broke, mothers and fathers ran toward the school, sweat pouring off them, frantic to get to their kids. Some people who didn't know if their spouse had survived met up at school, because both parents went straight to the kids. "I just wanted to find my kids and my wife and get the hell off this island," said one father. And together they walked, he and his wife and young son and daughter, 60 blocks or so up to Grand Central and safety.

The first crash had changed everything; the second changed it again. Anyone who thought the first was an accident now knew better. This was not some awful, isolated episode, not Oklahoma City, not even the first World Trade Center bombing. Now this felt like a war, and the system responded accordingly; the emergency plans came out of the drawers and clicked one by one into place. The city buckled, the traffic stopped, the bridges and tunnels were shut down at 9:35 as warnings tumbled one after another; the Empire State Building was evacuated, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the United Nations. First the New York airports were closed, then Washington's, and then the whole country was grounded for the first time in history.

THE PATHS OF DESTRUCTION

Four passenger jets, taking off within 15 minutes of one another from three East Coast airports, were transformed by hijackers into fuel-laden missiles. Two pierced the World Trade Center towers, minutes apart, causing their collapse. Another pierced the Pentagon; a fourth crashed near Pittsburgh



- 1 7:58 a.m.** United Airlines Flight 175, a Boeing 767, departs Boston's Logan Airport for Los Angeles with 56 passengers and 9 crew
- 2 7:59 a.m.** American Airlines Flight 11, a Boeing 767, also departs Boston bound for Los Angeles, with 81 passengers and 11 crew
- 3 8:01 a.m.** United Airlines Flight 93, a Boeing 757, leaves Newark for San Francisco with 38 passengers and 7 crew
- 4 8:10 a.m.** American Airlines Flight 77, a Boeing 757, departs Washington Dulles Airport for Los Angeles with 58 passengers and 6 crew
- 5 8:45 a.m.** American Airlines Flight 11 crashes into the north tower (1 WTC) of the World Trade Center
- 6 9:06 a.m.** United Airlines Flight 175 slams into the south tower (2 WTC) of the World Trade Center
- 7 9:40 a.m.** American Airlines Flight 77 hits the Pentagon
- 8 10:00 a.m.** The south tower (2 WTC) collapses
- 9 10:29 a.m.** The north tower (1 WTC) collapses
- 10 10:37 a.m.** United Airlines Flight 93 crashes in Shanksville, Pa., 80 miles southeast of Pittsburgh
- 11 5:25 p.m.** A third building in the World Trade Center complex collapses

Sources: AP, Flight Explorer
TIME Graphic

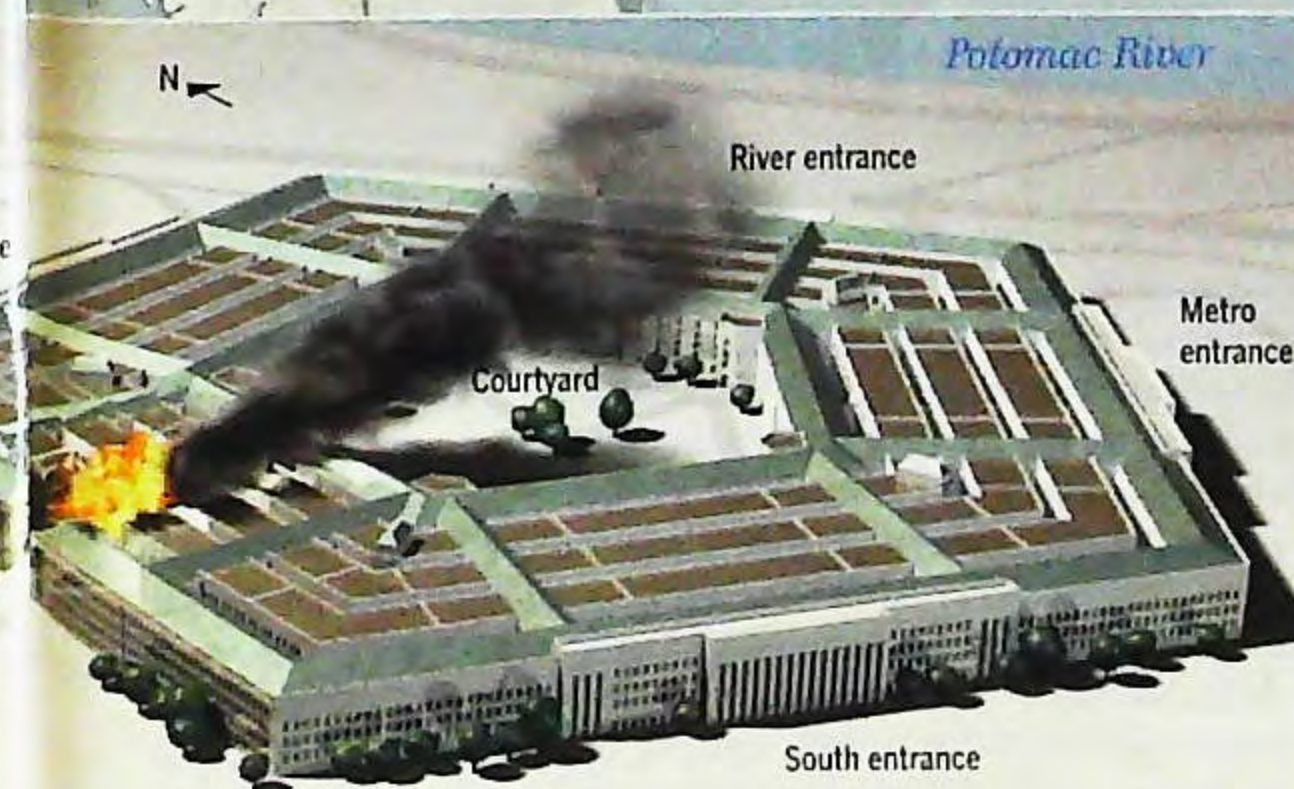
Hijacked from Dulles, American Flight 77 plunges into the west side of the Pentagon, where Army brass are located.

American Airlines Flight 77

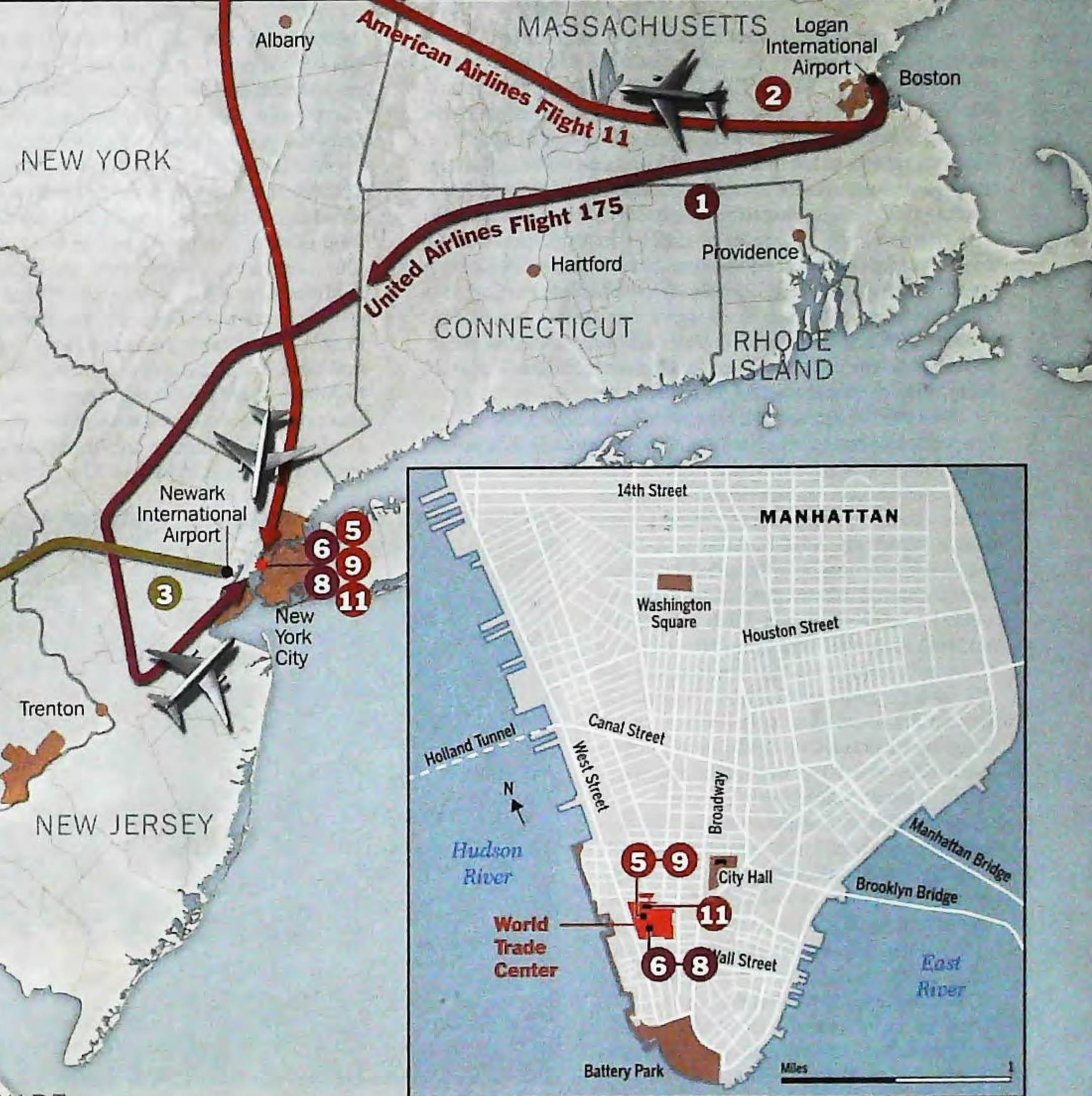


Mall entrance

Helicopter landing pad



Norfolk



At the moment the second plane was slamming into the south tower, President Bush was being introduced to the second-graders of Emma E. Booker Elementary in Sarasota, Fla. When he arrived at the school he had been whisked into a holding room: National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice needed to speak to him. But he soon appeared in the classroom and listened appreciatively as the children went through their reading drill. As he was getting ready to pose for pictures with the teachers and kids, chief of staff Andy Card entered the room, walked over to the President and whispered in his right ear. The President's face became visibly tense and serious. He nodded. Card left and for several minutes the President seemed distracted and somber, but then he resumed his interaction with the class. "Really good readers, whew!" he told them. "These must be sixth-graders!"

Meanwhile, in the room where Bush was scheduled to give his remarks, about 200 people, including local officials, school personnel and students, waited under the hot lights. Word of the crash began to circulate; reporters called their editors, but details were sparse—until someone remembered there was a TV in a nearby office. The President finally entered, about 35 minutes late, and made his brief comments. "This is a difficult time for America," he began. He ordered a massive investigation to "hunt down the folks who committed this act." Meanwhile the bomb dogs took a few extra passes through Air Force One, and an extra fighter escort was added. But the President too was going to have trouble getting home.

Even as the President spoke, the second front opened. Having hit the country's financial and cultural heart, the killers went for its political and military muscles. David Marra, 23, an information-technology specialist, had turned his BMW off an I-395 exit to the highway just west of the Pentagon when he saw an American Airlines jet swooping in, its wings wobbling, looking like it was going to slam right into the Pentagon: "It was 50 ft. off the deck when he came in. It sounded like the pilot had the throttle completely floored. The plane rolled left and then rolled right. Then he caught an edge of his wing on the ground." There is a helicopter pad right in front of the side of the Pentagon. The wing touched there, then the plane cartwheeled into the building.

Two minutes later, a "credible threat" forced the evacuation of the White House, and eventually State and Justice and all the federal office buildings. Secret Service officers had automatic weapons drawn as they patrolled Lafayette Park, across from the White House. Police-car radios cracked with reports that rogue airplanes had been spotted over the White House. The planes turned out to be harmless civilian aircraft that air-traffic controllers at National Airport were scrambling to help land so they could clear the air space over the nation's capital.

But that was not all; there was a third front as well. At 9:58 the Westmoreland County emergency-operations center, 35 miles southeast of Pittsburgh, received a frantic cell-phone call from a man who said he was locked in the rest room aboard United Flight 93. Glenn Cramer, the dispatch supervisor, said

the man was distraught and kept repeating, "We are being hijacked! We are being hijacked!" He also said this was not a hoax, and that the plane "was going down." Said Cramer: "He heard some sort of explosion and saw white smoke coming from the plane. Then we lost contact with him."

The flight had taken off at 8:01 from Newark, N.J., bound for San Francisco. But as it passed south of Cleveland, Ohio, it took a sudden, violent left turn and headed inexplicably back into Pennsylvania. As the 757 and its 38 passengers and seven crew members blew past Pittsburgh, air-traffic controllers tried frantically to raise the crew via radio. There was no response.

Forty miles further down the new flight path, in rural Somerset County, Terry Butler, 40, was pulling the radiator from a gray 1992 Dodge Caravan at the junkyard where he works. He had been watching the news and knew all flights were supposed to be grounded. He was stunned when he looked up in the sky and saw Flight 93 cutting through the lingering morning fog. "It was moving like you wouldn't believe," he said.



SAFE HAVEN Bush and Card consult aboard Air Force One en route to Offutt Air Force Base in Omaha, Neb. At 8:30 p.m., Bush addressed the nation from the Oval Office

The rogue plane soared over woodland, cattle pastures and cornfields until it passed over Kelly Leverknight's home. She too was watching the news. Her husband, on his regular tour of duty with the Air National Guard's 167th Airlift Wing in Martinsburg, W.Va., had just called to reassure his wife that his base was still operating normally when she heard the plane rush by. "It was headed toward the school," she said, the school where her three children were.

Had Flight 93 stayed aloft a few seconds longer, it would have plowed into Shanksville-Stony Creek School and its 501 students, grades K through 12. Instead, at 10:06 a.m., the plane smashed into a reclaimed section of an old coal strip mine. The largest pieces of the plane still extant are barely bigger than a telephone book. "I just keep thinking—two miles," said elementary principal Rosemarie Tipton. "There but for the grace of God—two miles."

CIA Director George Tenet was having a leisurely breakfast with his mentor, former Senator David Boren, at the St. Regis Hotel, when he got the news. Their omelettes had just arrived when Tenet's security detail descended with a cell phone. "Give me the quick summary," Tenet said calmly into the phone. He listened a few moments, and then told Boren: "The World Trade Center has been hit. We're pretty sure it wasn't an accident. It looks like a terrorist act." He then got back to the phone, named a dozen people he wanted summoned to the CIA situation room. "Assemble them in 15 minutes," he said. "I should almost be there by then."

Vice President Dick Cheney was in his West Wing office when the Secret Service burst in, physically hurrying him out of the room. "We have to move; we're moving now, Sir; we're moving," the agents said as they took him to a bunker on the White House grounds. Once there, with members of the National Security staff and Administration officials, they told Cheney that a plane was headed for the White House. Mrs. Cheney and Laura Bush were brought in as well. Staff members in the Old Execu-



tive Office Building, across the street from the White House, were huddled in front of their TV screens when they heard from TV reporters that they were being evacuated. Then the tape loop began. "The building is being evacuated. Please walk to the nearest exit." "The looks were stone-faced," a staff member to the Vice President said. "They were just zombies," said another.

Senator Patrick Leahy of Vermont was heading to the Supreme Court Building to speak to a group of appellate judges. He had already heard the news from New York City. As he walked into the court building, he heard a muffled boom outside. It was the plane attacking the Pentagon. "I've got to tell you before we start there's some horrible, horrible news coming in," Leahy told the roomful of judges. By the time he was leaving the building, there were already 20 cops surrounding it. As he neared the Russell Senate Office Building, a Capitol policeman walked up. "Senator, I don't know if you want to go back to your office," he warned. "They're evacuating the buildings."

"I've got a lot of staff still working there," Leahy snapped. "I'm not going to leave them in the building."

Washington was supposed to have contingency plans for disasters like this, but the chaos on the streets was clear evidence that plans still needed work. By 10:45 a.m. the downtown streets around the Capitol, government buildings and White House were laced with cars pointing in every direction, unable to move. A security officer for one of the buildings sat on a park bench. He had been locked out of his building, so he didn't have a clue if the senior officials inside were out and in a safe place. "I'm not surprised at this," he said. "We aren't prepared. We were supposed to have a plan to evacuate our Cabinet officer to a place 50 miles out, but none of that has been done." Capitol police were slow to move as well. There was no increased security, no heightened alert around the Capitol for fully half an hour after the New York attack. Senate minority leader Trent Lott was drafting a press release to condemn the attack when he looked outside his window and saw black smoke billowing up from across the Potomac. He didn't wait for an evacuation order. He gathered up his top staff and security detail and headed out of the Capitol, shocked to find that tourists were still walking into the building while he was fleeing it.

Senator Robert Byrd, the Senate's president pro tempore and fourth in line to the presidency, was put in a chauffeured car and driven to a safe house, as were Speaker Dennis Hastert and other congressional leaders. There were rumors flying that the fourth plane, the one that went down in Pennsylvania, had been headed for the Capitol or Camp David. The safe houses are scattered throughout the Washington, northern Virginia and southern Maryland area. The Secret Service has similar safe houses where they can take the Vice President and other top Administration officials as well. They are homes, offices, in some cases even fire stations, that have secure phones so that the leaders can still communicate.

BY 11 A.M., THE STREETS IN WASHINGTON were gridlocked with people trying to get out. In a place that doesn't tend to carpool, co-workers had stuffed themselves into available vehicles. Both the 14th Street

Bridge and Arlington Memorial Bridge, leading to Virginia and past the Pentagon, had been closed, as were the airports and Union Station. On the corner of Constitution Avenue and 14th Street, day-care workers from the Ronald Reagan Building clutched frightened toddlers into a tight bunch. Hysteria was gripping the city: senior generals at the Pentagon phoned children and other relatives, warning them not to drink tap water for the next 36 hours. They feared reservoirs might be poisoned.

Fed Chairman Alan Greenspan was flying back to the U.S. from Switzerland when his airliner was ordered to turn back. He reached vice chairman Roger Ferguson by phone as soon as he could, and Ferguson coordinated contacts with Reserve banks and Governors both in Washington and around the country. The goal: to make sure U.S. banks would keep functioning.

Meanwhile, the mood on board Air Force One could not have been more tense. Bush was in his office in the front of the plane, on the phone with Cheney, National Security Adviser Rice, FBI director Robert Mueller and the First Lady. Cheney told him that law-enforcement and security agencies believed the White

House and Air Force One were both targets. Bush, the Vice President insisted, should head to a safe military base as soon as possible. White House staff members, Air Force flight attendants and Secret Service agents all were subdued and shaken. One agent sadly reported that the Secret Service field office in New York City, with its 200 agents, was located in the World Trade Center. The plane's TV monitors were tuned in to local news broadcasts; Bush was watching as the second tower collapsed. About 45 minutes after takeoff, a decision was made to fly to Offutt Air Force Base in Nebraska, site of the nation's nuclear command and one of the most secure military installations in the country. But Bush and his aides didn't want to wait that long before the President could make a public statement. Secret Service officials and military advisers in Washington consulted a map and chose a spot for Bush to make a brief touchdown: Barksdale Air Force Base, outside of Shreveport, La. In Bush's airborne office, aides milled about while Bush spoke on the phone. "That's what we're paid for, boys," he said. "We're gonna take care of this. We're going to find out who did this. They're not going to like me as President." The handful of reporters aboard were told not to use their cell phones—and not even to turn them on—because the signals might allow someone to identify the plane's location.

Air Force One landed at Barksdale at 11:45 a.m., with fighter jets hovering beside each wing throughout the descent. The perimeter was surrounded by Air Force personnel in full combat gear: green fatigues, flak jackets, helmets, M-16s at the ready. The small motorcade traveled to Building 245. A sign on the glass windows of several doors, in large black type, read DEFCON DELTA. That is the highest possible state of military alert. Bush made his second remarks at 12:36 from a windowless conference room, in front of two American flags dragged together by Air Force privates. "Freedom itself was attacked this morning by a faceless coward," he began, then spoke for two minutes before leaving the room.

IN NEW YORK, THE CHAOS WAS ONLY BEGINNING. CONVOYS of police vehicles raced downtown toward the cloud of smoke at the end of the avenues. The streets and parks filled with people, heads turned like sunflowers, all gazing south, at the clouds that were on the ground instead of in the sky, at the fighter jets streaking down the Hudson River. The aircraft carriers U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* and U.S.S. *George Washington*, along with seven other warships, took up positions off the East Coast.

Jim Gartenberg, 35, a commercial real estate broker with an office on the 86th floor of 1 World Trade Center, kept calling his wife Jill to let her know he was O.K. but trapped. "He let us know he was stuck," says Jill, who is pregnant with their second child. "He called several times until 10. Then nothing. He sounded calm, except for when he told me how much he loved me. He said, 'I don't know if I'll make it.' He sounded like he knew it would be one of the last times he would say he loved me." That was right before the building turned to powder.

The tower's structural strength came largely from the 244 steel girders that formed the perimeter of each floor and bore most of the weight of all the floors above. Steel starts to bend at 1000°. The floors above where the plane hit—each floor weighing millions of pounds—were resting on steel that was softening from the heat of the burning jet fuel, softening until the girders could no longer bear the load above. "All that steel turns into spaghetti," explains retired ATF investigator Ronald Baughn. "And then all of a sudden that structure is untenable, and the

weight starts bearing down on floors that were not designed to hold that weight, and you start having collapse." Each floor drops onto the one below, the weight becoming greater and greater, and eventually it all comes down. "It didn't topple. It came straight down. All floors are pancaking down, and there are people on those floors."

The south tower collapsed at 10, fulfilling the prophecy of eight years ago, when last the terrorists tried to bring it down. The north tower came down 29 minutes later, crushing itself like a piston. "I know that the rescue people who were helping us didn't get out of the building," said security official Bill Heitman, who worked on the 80th floor. "I know they didn't make it." And he broke down and sobbed. All that was left of the New York skyline was a chalk cloud. The towers themselves were reduced to jagged stumps; the atrium lobby arches looked like a bombed out



LORD HAVE MERCY In hastily called religious services, like this noon Mass in Spokane, Wash., Americans sought solace, comfort and a way to make sense of it all

cathedral. "A huge plume of smoke was chasing people, rushing through those winding streets of lower Manhattan," says Charlie Stuard, 37, an Internet consultant who works downtown. "It was chaos, a whiteout. That's when people really started to panic. You could see it coming. A bunch of us jumped over a rail, onto the pilings on the East River, ready to jump in."

The streets filled with masked men and women, cloth and clothing torn to tie across their noses and mouths against the dense debris rain. Some streets were eerily quiet. All trading had stopped on Wall Street, so those canyons were empty, the

ash several inches thick and gray, the way snow looks in New York almost before it hits the ground. Sounds were both muffled and magnified, echoing off buildings, softened by the smoke. You could hear the chirping of the locator devices the fire fighters wear, hear the whistle of the respirators, see only the lights flashing red and yellow through the haze.

Major Reginald Mebane, who heads security for one of the state court buildings, organized a group of about 10 officers. They grabbed some medical equipment and hopped a court bus to help evacuate people. But when one tower began to collapse, they raced for cover inside Building Five of the Trade Center complex. The smoke made it so dark they could see only a few feet in front of them, even with flashlights. They felt their way along the walls and windows to get out. "The building just blew," says Bill Faulkner, 53, a Vietnam veteran who was part

ed to help. Volunteers with the least training were diverted to blood-donation centers or the dreaded "black teams," where they would not be called upon to save a life, just handle dead bodies during triage. The color code: black for dead, red for immediately life-threatening wounds, yellow for serious, non-life threatening and green for the walking wounded. Police and fire fighters realized even as they worked that hundreds of their colleagues, the first to respond, were dead. Each looked as if someone had kicked him in the stomach. A looter was arrested. He had two fire department boots on his feet, and the cops looked as if they were going to kill him.

The refugee march began at the base of the island and wound up the highways as far as you could see, tens of thousands of people with clothes dusted, faces grimy, marching northward, away from the battlefield. There was not a single smile on a single face. But there was remarkably little panic as well—more steel and ingenuity: Where am I going to sleep tonight? How will I get home? "They can't keep New Jersey closed forever," a man said. Restaurant-supply companies on the Bowery handed out wet towels. A cement mixer drove toward the Queensboro Bridge with dozens of laborers holding onto it, hitching a ride out of town. Overcrowded buses, one after another, shipped New York's workers north. Ambulances, some covered with debris, sped past them, ferrying the injured to the waiting hospitals.

All over the city, people walked with radios pinned to their ears. One man had the news on his car radio turned up as close to 100 people surrounded the car listening to the reports. Just before noon, a radio commentator said, "Inarguably, this is the worst day in the history of New York City." No one argued.

Churches opened their sanctuaries for prayer services. St. Bartholomew's offered water and lemonade to everyone passing by. The noon Mass at St. Patrick's was nearly full. "We pray as we have never prayed before," said Monsignor Ferry. "Remember the victims today. Forgive them their sins, and bring them into the light." Posted defiantly in every window of one restaurant was the sign WE REFUSE TO GIVE IN TO TERRORISM. CIBO IS OPEN FOR BUSINESS. GOD BLESS AMERICA. A well-dressed man in a suit sat on a bench in Central Park, his head bowed, his hands clasped between his knees. A carousel of quiet toys turned in the darkened windows of FAO Schwarz.

There were no strangers in town anymore, only sudden friends, sharing names, news and phones. Lines formed, at least 20 people long, at all pay phones, because cell phones were not working. Should we go to work? Is the subway safe? "Let's all have a good look at each other," a passenger said to the others in her car. "We may be our last memory." The passengers stranded at La Guardia Airport asked one another where exactly they were supposed to go and how they were to get there. Bridges, tunnels and ferries to Manhattan were not running. Strangers were offering each other a place to wait in Queens, giving advice on good diners in Astoria. Limousine drivers offered to take passengers to Boston for a price. A vendor dispensed free bottles of water to travelers waiting in the hot sun.

Dr. Khoong Cheigh, a kidney specialist at New York Presbyterian Hospital, was handed an "urgent notice," along with other arriving staff. "The disaster plan for New York Presbyterian Hospital is currently in effect, and an emergency command center has been established." All elective surgeries were canceled, and any patient well enough to be discharged was released to make room for the incoming wounded. At Belle-

of the group. "I would be dead if I hadn't jumped behind a pillar." Another court officer, Ed Kennedy, who also hid behind the pillar, says he grabbed the arm of a woman in an effort to pull her behind the pillar with him. But he didn't grab her fast enough. Suddenly he realized he was holding just an arm. It was only when a fireman broke the window in the Borders bookstore that the men were able to escape.

Fire fighters pushed people further back, back up north. Mayor Giuliani took to the streets, walking through the raining dust and ordering people to evacuate the entire lower end of the island. Medical teams performed triage on the streetcorners of Tribeca, doling out medical supplies and tending the walking wounded. Doctors, nurses, EMTs, even lifeguards, were recruit-

vue, the city's largest trauma center, an extra burn unit was set up in the emergency room. The night shift was called in early. The psychiatric department staff, the biggest in the world, was mobilized to meet the survivors and families. "We actually have too many doctors now," chief medical officer Eric Manheimer reported in midafternoon. "We thought we would have more patients." By 5:40, only 159 patients had been admitted—which suggested not how few had been injured, but how few could be saved.

Security guards were turning all cars away from New York Weill Cornell Medical Center, allowing only emergency vehicles through. Around 10:40 a taxi pulled up, bearing three women and a man. Security tried to stop them, but a woman yelled, "We have a woman in labor here!" The guards waved them through.

At St. Vincent's Hospital in Greenwich Village they were running out of Silvadene to treat burn victims, and began raiding the local drug stores. A hospital staff member wheeled around a grocery cart with a sign on the side reading, WE NEED CLOTHING DONATIONS. Within the hour, local residents had brought dozens of shopping bags full of blazers, shoes and pants, for patients whose clothes had been burned off. Edward Cardinal Egan led a team of priests to begin giving last rites. At one point he emerged from the emergency room, wearing blue hospital scrubs. His purple robes peeked out at the collar, and over one of his blue rubber gloves he had placed his enormous gold cardinal's ring. He said, quite formally, "I am amazed at the goodness of our police and our fire fighters and our hospital people."

When English teacher Karen Kriegel heard the news, she couldn't just stay in her downtown office; she had to do something. So she printed up some handmade signs that said GIVE BLOOD NOW, photocopied them at a copy shop and headed for St. Vincent's. As she started walking and handing out flyers, 100 people started walking with her. When they reached the hospital, the gurneys were everywhere, and rolling desk chairs covered with white sheets had been brought out to the pavement to handle bodies. The chairs already looked like ghosts.

Outside the N.Y. Blood Center, the line of prospective donors stretched halfway down the block, around the corner, all the way to 66th Street and around that corner—more than a thousand, all told. Type O donors, the universal donors, were handed little yellow movie tickets and asked to form a separate line. Eventually some blood centers turned everyone else away, told them to come back another day. "It's just amazing," said nurse Anne Taylor, standing in the donors' line. "There'll be a three- or four-hour wait, and just look at all of these people standing here. They can't scare us." Bellevue hospital had so many donors, it ran out of plastic bags.

THE WARLIKE MOBILIZATION WAS BY NO MEANS LEFT TO THE stricken zones. At Chalkville Elementary School near Birmingham, Ala., more than 700 calls had been received from worried parents, many of whom came at midmorning to pick up their children. Churches and schools and civic groups all around the country offered to help anyone stranded by the grounding of the nation's planes. All over Los Angeles, offices and government buildings were shut down and surrounded by police: city hall, the Federal Building in Westwood, even shopping malls. At the Federal Building, armored rescue vehicles and Ford cars ringed the entrances and exits, with FBI staffers decked out in

black and brandishing MP5 assault rifles. Even Express Mail trucks were searched by the FBI before they were allowed onto the premises. Gas pipeline companies were beefing up security at key transmission stations. Grand Coulee Dam in central Washington State was locked down. Gasoline stations around the country were running out of gas as motorists rushed to top off their tanks.

In Chicago, Steve Bernard was huddled around the TV with colleagues on the 36th floor of Chicago's Sears Tower, shortly after 8 a.m., watching the smoke billowing from the



LAYING DOWN THEIR ARMS Todd Kirsch of Connecticut was one of the thousands of blood donors who streamed into American Red Cross facilities around the country

World Trade Center after the first attack. When the second plane hit, bewilderment at a faraway spectacle turned into a much more personal, creeping panic. The Chicago staff of the Piper Jaffray investment firm suddenly redirected their gazes toward the windows, quietly searching for jets on their own horizon. The 110-story Sears Tower, even taller than the World Trade Center, is the tallest building in the U.S.; a vulnerable target. Bernard's wife called him and insisted he come home. Within an hour, the building was evacuated.

Across the country, houses of all kinds of worship filled with grieving Americans singing *America the Beautiful*, wiping away streams of tears. "Humanity came apart in lower Manhattan today, and each of us is wounded. We mourn the loss of our innocence," declared Rabbi Gary Gerson at Oak Park Temple, a Reform Jewish congregation outside Chicago. "Terror has struck us, but it will not destroy us. Now we are all Israelis," he added.

Indeed, there were many Americans who refused to be intimidated by the tragedy, rightly or wrongly. They were reas-

IF PEOPLE ALL OVER THE COUNTRY HAD A SENSE OF BEING suddenly at war—chat boards on Yahoo filled up with people wanting to volunteer for military service—it was with an enemy they could not see and not easily touch.

Meanwhile the U.S. government reassembled and mobilized. Secretary of State Colin Powell cut short his trip to Latin America to return to the U.S. By midafternoon, members of Congress were calling on their leaders to summon a special session, to show the world the government was up and running. About half of the Senate convened in a conference room at the Capitol Hill Police Station to hear from their leaders—some to vent their outrage at President Bush. Both Democrats and Republicans wanted to know, Where is he? Why isn't he here? Why isn't he in New York? Why isn't he talking to the country? The answer: Bush had been told by the Secret Service, the military and the FBI that it was not yet safe to return to Washington. Only 24 hours later, after absorbing a wave of criticism for his delayed return, did aides claim there had been "credible evidence" that the White House and Air Force One were targets.

Some Republicans on the Hill wanted to know why Counsellor Karen Hughes was the highest government official anyone saw on television all day, other than Bush's brief, unsettling appearance in Louisiana. They wanted to see Bush stride across the South Lawn and show that this is not a country that can be sent into hiding by cowards. "He better have the speech of his life ready tonight," sighed one Republican strategist. Bush did return a few hours later, did stride across the South Lawn and did deliver a reasonably effective national address from the Oval Office. But it wasn't until the following day that he stepped up the intensity of his rhetoric and declared the attacks "acts of war."

Tucked inside the shock and fury was dismay at the performance of others whose job—perhaps impossible—was to prevent this from happening. There were quiet calls for the heads of CIA chief Tenet and FAA boss Jane Garvey for allowing so appalling a breach of security on their watch. And there was an equal determination to find those who were behind it.

Only God knows what kind of heroic acts took place at 25,000 feet as passengers and crews contended with four teams of highly trained enemy terrorists. But it is clear that the hunt for the culprits began way up in the sky, by the doomed passengers and crews themselves, minutes before the attacks took place. In their final goodbyes, on brief and haunting calls from their cell phones, the victims on board at least two of the four planes whispered the number and even some of the seat assignments of the terrorists. A flight attendant on board American Flight 11 called her airline's flight operations center in Dallas on a special airlink line and reported that passengers were being stabbed.

That gave investigators a heads-up that something had gone terribly wrong, but there were plenty of other clues. Even before the smoke had cleared, it was obvious that the culprits knew their way around a Boeing cockpit—and all the security weaknesses in the U.S. civil aviation system. The enemy had chosen the quietest day of the week for the operation, when there would be fewer passengers to subdue; they had boarded westbound transcontinental flights—planes fully loaded with fuel. They were armed with knives and box cutters, had gained access to the cockpits and herded everyone to the back of the plane. Once at the controls, they had turned off at least one of the aircraft's self-identifying beacons, known as transponders, a move that renders

surging, if not necessarily reasonable. The order to close the U.S. Courthouse in Little Rock, Ark., came shortly before 10 a.m., and it was promptly heeded by everyone except a solitary federal district judge. There sat Henry Woods, age 83, his lined face framed by a mane of white hair, beneath a replica of the seal of the U.S. Around him, at his insistence, a jury and lawyers carried on in a damage suit stemming from, of all things, a 1999 American Airlines crash. "This looks like an intelligent jury to me," Woods said, explaining his refusal to grant a mistrial to the defense after getting word of the disaster. "And I didn't want the judicial system interrupted by a terrorist act, no matter how horrible."

the planes somewhat less visible to air traffic controllers. And each aircraft had gone through dramatic but carefully executed course corrections, including a stunning last maneuver by Flight 77. The pilot of that plane came in low from south of the Pentagon, and pulled a 270° turn before slamming into the west wall of the building.

And though everyone wanted to be prudent, there weren't a lot of suspects to round up. Palestinian terror groups are experienced at suicide missions, but have never attempted an operation this large. Groups with links to the Iranian government took down the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia in 1996, killing 19, but that target was a long way from the U.S. Libya has lost its taste for terror, most experts believe, and Iraq's Saddam Hussein has always favored loud, brutish force over quiet finesse. Besides, no group other than Osama bin Laden's loose knit network of operatives in dozens of countries worldwide has ever shown the will, wallet or gall to attack the U.S. before. Bin Laden is responsible for the attacks on U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Three weeks ago when he told an Arab journalist he would mount an unprecedented attack on the U.S. "This was well funded and well planned," said Senator Pat Roberts, who sits on the Senate Intelligence Committee. "It took a lot of planning. The weather had to be just so on the East Coast. They used sophisticated tactics where they hijacked planes, killed the crew, and they had to have aviators or navigators who knew what they were doing."

Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage gathered his senior aides in the State Department's seventh-floor secure facility shortly after 9 a.m. Tuesday for a videoconference with the Administration's top national security aides. National Security Adviser Rice and her top counterterrorism coordinator Richard Clark were on one screen, with FBI Director Mueller and his senior aides, the CIA's counterterrorism director, and FAA officials on others. Vice President Cheney was supposed to be in on the teleconference, but the Secret Service had already spirited him off to a safehouse. "We knew we were in trouble," says one official who was present. "We've got suicide attacks here."

Rice stayed silent as the meeting progressed; Clark did most of the talking. Finally at around 9:45 a.m., aides behind Mueller started murmuring and whispering into his ear. Mueller interrupted everyone. "The Pentagon has been hit by an airplane," the FBI chief announced. All the State Department officials turned their heads to Armitage, who was running the building in Powell's absence. "Let's increase security outside the building," Armitage said calmly, seeming unperturbed. Another aide piped up. "We probably need to think about getting the hell out of here," he said. Armitage decided to evacuate, and an alternate command center was set up at the Foreign Service Institute in Arlington, Va. Senior State Department aides jumped in staff cars to race to Arlington but immediately ran into clogged traffic in Washington.

By Tuesday afternoon, the spooks were making progress. Eavesdroppers at the supersecret National Security Agency had picked up at least two electronic intercepts indicating the terrorists had ties to bin Laden. By nightfall, less than 12 hours after the attacks, U.S. officials told TIME that their sense that he was involved had got closer to what one senior official said was 90%. The next morning, U.S. officials told TIME they have evidence that each of the four terrorist teams had a certified pilot with them; some of these pilots had flown for an airline in Saudi Arabia and received pilot training in the U.S. It's not yet clear



THIS LIGHT OF MINE Like tears, candlelight vigils sprang up in response to the tragedy and would not be checked. This one was held at the Civic Center in Stirling, Ill.

whether the pilots were trained in the U.S., or in Saudi Arabia or both. Intelligence officials believe each team had four to six persons. Some team members, it is thought, crossed the Canadian border to get into the U.S. Sources told TIME that within the past few months, the FBI added to the U.S. watch list two men whom the bureau believed to be associated with one of the Islamic Jihad terror groups. Through a screwup, the suspects were lost. The two men appear to have been on the American Airlines Flight 77, the plane that crashed into the Pentagon, sources told TIME. Boston appears to have been a central hub for the operation; U.S. intelligence believes a bin Laden cell in Florida was a support group helping with the aviation aspects of the attack.

Intelligence officials poring over old reports believe they got their first inkling of planning for the attack last June, although at the time the intelligence was too vague to indicate the scale of the operation. In the summer U.S. embassies, particularly those in the Middle East, were put on heightened alert, as was the U.S. military in the region. The CIA was getting vague reports "of some kind of spectacular happenings" by terrorists, said a U.S. intelligence official, but the reports were vague as to timing. "A lot of this reporting we had in the summer that gained our attention and had us concerned, but wasn't specific, could have been tied to this," said a U.S. intelligence official.

Even had they known more, could officials ever have contemplated the scale of this thing? The blasts were so powerful that counterterrorism teams have begun asking the airlines for fuel loads on the plane, aviation experts have been asked to cal-

culate the explosive yield of each blast—in kiloton terms. The reason? Washington wants to see if the planes amounted to weapons of mass destruction. "What we want people to realize is they've crossed a line here," said a U.S. intelligence official. In fact, some senior Administration officials are considering drafting a declaration of war, although the State Department is leery since nobody knows precisely who the war would be against.

By contrast, as the day unfolded, it looked awfully easy to declare war on us. The attack was the perfect mockery of the President's faith in missile defense: What if the missile is an American Airlines plane, and the pilot wants to kill you? It was only eight years ago that a group of zealots led by Ramzi Yousef tried to take the towers down from the bottom, with a rented Ryder truck full of homemade explosives. Their goal, as an unsigned statement presented later at trial put it, was no less than toppling "the towers that constitute the pillars of their civilization."

U.S. officials learned a great deal from that attempt, notes retired ATF investigator Baughn. But the terrorists also learned. "They learned that they had to come at it from a different attitude," Baughn says. "What they've done today was the easiest thing they could do. They didn't have to bring in any explosives. They didn't have to put a group of people together. They didn't have to go find a safe house. They didn't have to go construct anything. They didn't have to rent a truck. They didn't have to load the truck. They didn't have to drive it to some

place. All they had to do was hijack an airplane." They made it look so easy, you wondered if the only reason the U.S. has not seen a hijacking in 20 years was because hardly anyone was trying. It's a wonder why not; the Microsoft flight simulator and Fly! II—the two most popular simulators for personal computers—allow you to pretend to fly between the World Trade Center towers, and into them. Anyone looking to practice can buy the software off the shelf.

AT 7:30 P.M. TUESDAY, WITH THE PENTAGON STILL IN flames, the congressional leadership, with a crowd of Senators and Congressmen behind them, stood on the Capitol steps. "When Americans suffer and when people perpetrate acts against this country, we as a Congress and as a government stand united, and stand together," said an angry Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House, with Democrat Dick Gephardt standing stony silent beside him. Both parties "will stand shoulder to shoulder to fight this evil," Hastert promised. He asked everyone to bow their heads in a moment of silence. Afterward the Congressmen and Senators, Republicans joining Democrats, broke out into a chorus of *God Bless America*.

As patriotism swelled, the day threatened to loop us into the kinds of barbaric blood feuds from which we've always been able to stay away. So people lashed out, getting angry at our not very humble foreign policy, complaining about a culture of ironic detachment that made us unmoved by a threat that was very real. (Though in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, pollsters found that by a huge proportion, 80%, Americans were ready to go to war, and prepared for the body bags that go with it.)

Whatever the outcome, it was clear that some things had changed forever. The attacks will become a defining reference point for our culture and imagination, a question of before and after, safe and scarred. By 10:30 Tuesday morning, four tourists from the Czech Republic were at the Empire State building, buying up all the postcards with pictures of the World Trade Center on them. "Soon there will be no more of these cards also," one explained.

When one world ended at 8:45 on Tuesday morning, another was born, one we always trust in but never see, in which normal people become fierce heroes and everyone takes a test for which they haven't studied. As President Bush said in his speech to the nation, we are left with both a terrible sadness and a quiet unyielding anger. He was wrong, though, to talk of the steel of our resolve. Steel, we now know, bends and melts; we need to be made of something stronger than that now—not excluding an unseasoned President new to his job.

Do we now panic, or will we be brave? Once the dump trucks and bulldozers have cleared away the rubble and a thousand funeral Masses have been said, once the streets are swept clean of ash and glass and the stores and monuments and airports reopen, once we have begun to explain this to our children and to ourselves, what will we do? What else but build new cathedrals, and if they are bombed, build some more. Because the faith is in the act of building, not the building itself, and no amount of terror can keep us from scraping the sky. —Reported by the staff of TIME magazine

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Lance Morrow

The Case for Rage and Retribution

FOR ONCE, LET'S HAVE NO "GRIEF COUNSELORS" standing by with banal consolations, as if the purpose, in the midst of all this, were merely to make everyone feel better as quickly as possible. We shouldn't feel better.

For once, let's have no fatuous rhetoric about "healing." Healing is inappropriate now, and dangerous. There will be time later for the tears of sorrow.

A day cannot live in infamy without the nourishment of rage. Let's have rage.

What's needed is a unified, unifying, Pearl Harbor sort of purple American fury—a ruthless indignation that doesn't leak away in a week or two, wandering off into Prozac-induced forgetfulness or into the next media sensation (O.J. ... Elián ... Chandra ...) or into a corruptly thoughtful relativism (as has happened in the recent past, when, for example, you might hear someone say, "Terrible what he did, of course, but, you know, the Unabomber does have a point, doesn't he, about modern technology?").

Let America explore the rich reciprocal possibilities of the *fatwa*. A policy of focused brutality does not come easily to a self-conscious, self-indulgent, contradictory, diverse, humane nation with a short attention span. America needs to relearn a lost discipline, self-confident relentlessness—and to relearn why human nature has equipped us all with a weapon (abhorred in decent peacetime societies) called hatred.

As the bodies are counted, into the thousands and thousands, hatred will not, I think, be a difficult emotion to summon. Is the medicine too strong? Call it, rather, a wholesome and intelligent enmity—the sort that impels even such a prosperous, messily tolerant organism as America to act. Anyone who does not loathe the people who did these things, and the people who cheer them on, is too philosophical for decent company.

It's a practical matter, anyway. In war, enemies are enemies. You find them and put them out of business, on the sound principle that that's what they are trying to do to you. If what happened on Tuesday does not give Americans the political will needed to exterminate men like Osama bin Laden and those who conspire with them in evil mischief, then nothing ever will and we are in for a procession of black Tuesdays.

This was terrorism brought to near perfection as a dramatic form. Never has the evil business had such production values. Normally, the audience sees only the smoking aftermath—the blown-up embassy, the ruined barracks, the ship

with a blackened hole at the waterline. This time the first plane striking the first tower acted as a shill. It alerted the media, brought cameras to the scene so that they might be set up to record the vivid surreal bloom of the second strike ("Am I seeing this?") and then—could they be such engineering geniuses, so deft at demolition?—the catastrophic collapse of the two towers, one after the other, and a sequence of panic in the streets that might have been shot for a remake of *The War of the Worlds* or for *Independence Day*. Evil possesses an instinct for theater, which is why, in an era of gaudy and gifted media, evil may vastly magnify its damage by the power of horrific images.

It is important not to be transfixed. The police screamed to the people running from the towers, "Don't look back!"—a biblical warning against the power of the image. Terrorism is sometimes described (in a frustrated, oh-the-burdens-of-great-power tone of voice) as "asymmetrical warfare." So what? Most of history is a pageant of asymmetries. It is mostly the asymmetries that cause history to happen—an obscure Schickelgruber nearly destroys Europe; a mere atom, artfully diddled, incinerates a city. Elegant perplexity puts too much emphasis on the "asymmetrical" side of the phrase and not enough on the fact that it is, indeed, real warfare. Asymmetry is a concept. War is, as we see, blood and death.

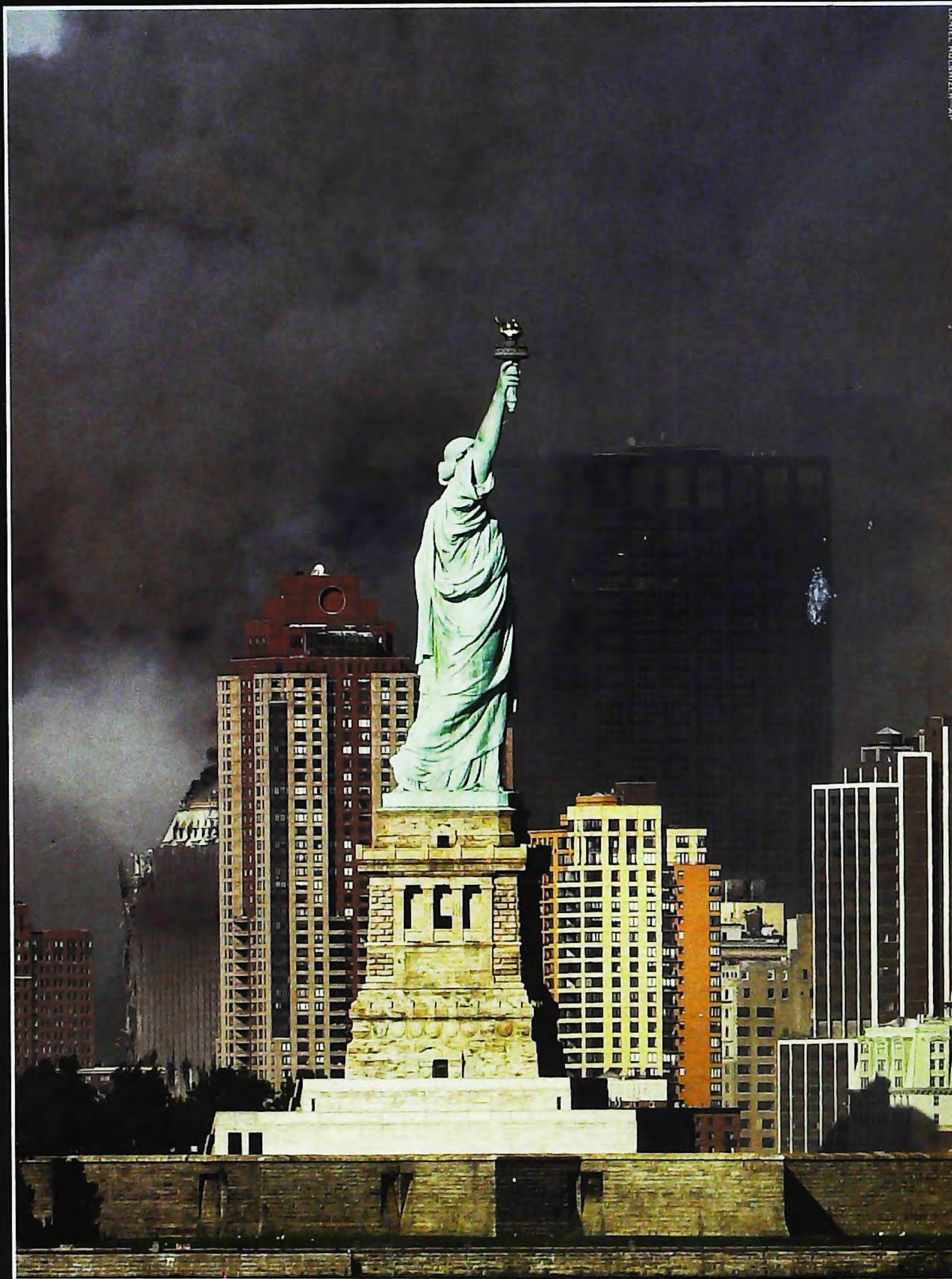
It is not a bad idea to repeat a line from the 19th century French anarchist thinker Pierre-Joseph Proudhon: "The fecundity of the unexpected far exceeds the prudence of statesmen." America, in the spasms of a few hours, became a changed country. It turned the corner, at last, out of the 1990s. The menu of American priorities was rearranged. The presidency of George W. Bush begins now. What seemed important a few days ago (in the media, at least) became instantly trivial. If Gary Condit is mentioned once in the next six months on cable television, I will be astonished.

During World War II, John Kennedy wrote home to his parents from the Pacific. He remarked that Americans are at their best during very good times or very bad times; the in-between periods, he thought, cause them trouble. I'm not sure that is true. Good times sometimes have a tendency to make Americans squalid.

The worst times, as we see, separate the civilized of the world from the uncivilized. This is the moment of clarity. Let the civilized toughen up, and let the uncivilized take their chances in the game they started. ■

What's needed is a unified, unifying, Pearl Harbor sort of purple American fury—a ruthless indignation that doesn't leak away in a week or two





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